THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, the 23rd April 1948.

The House met in the Council Chamber, Fort St. George, at eleven of the clock, Mr. President (THE HON. SRI R. B. RAMAKRISHNA RAJU) in the Chair.

I.—QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

STARRED QUESTIONS.

Procurement of paddy from Sriperumbudur.

* 68 Q.—SRI C. N. MUTHURANGA MUDALIYAR: Will the Hon. Minister for Food be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether it is a fact that on 1st February 1947 Sri K. M. Audinarayana Chettiar, the local procuring agent of Poonamallee Panchayat Area, procured paddy from Sriperumbudur village;

(*b*) whether the 'E' Forms supplied to ryots did not show either the serial number or the date of purchases;

(*c*) whether it is a fact that the Tahsildar of Sriperumbudur has refused to recognize the undated receipts for the purpose of sanctioning the bonus and the ryots deprived of their bonus;

(*d*) whether it is a fact that even the difference in the price of 3 annas 1 pie due to the then enhancement has not been paid to the parties;

(*e*) whether it is a fact that the ryots of Sriperumbudur taluk have complained to the Collector for the payment of bonus and for the payment of the difference in the prices;

(*f*) what action was taken in the matter or whether any action is proposed to be taken; and

(*g*) on what authority a local agent in one firka was enabled to procure paddy in another firka?

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—"(*a*) Yes.

"(*b*) No. The 'E' forms did not contain either the serial number or the date of purchase.

"(*c*) On a complaint received from two producers, who had delivered paddy that the Tahsildar, Sriperumbudur did not admit the application for payment of bonus without valid 'E' form receipts, the Collector of Chingleput has issued instructions to the Tahsildar that the omission to note the serial number in the 'E' forms may be ignored and bonus should be paid to the ryots, if the entries in the purchase registers support the transactions.

"(*d*) On the receipt of a similar complaint, the Collector of Chingleput has issued orders to pay the difference in price of Re. 0–3–1 to the producers by the procuring agent and the difference in rates has been paid to the ryots.

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"(e) Two ryots complained to the Collector for the payment of bonus and the difference in price.

"(f) The Collector of Chingleput has issued necessary orders to pay the difference in price and the bonus to the ryots as stated in reply to questions (c) and (d).

"(g) As the procuring agent of the Poonamallee Panchayat Board area represented to the Collector of Chingleput in January 1947 that he had no stocks of foodgrains for distribution in that area and that he may be permitted to purchase stocks outside his area, the Collector considering the very low stock position, permitted him to procure stocks outside the area allotted to him, as a temporary measure."

SRI C. N. MUTHURANGA MUDALIYAR :—"Is it in order, according to the Ration rules, to permit such irregularities of procuring paddy out of the allotted area?"

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—"That is a discretion given to the Collector to meet a difficult situation. This is a question of food-grains distribution and a sudden shortage might arise at any time. If the Collectors are not given that amount of liberty to move stocks from wherever they are available to the areas in which they are urgently required, then food distribution will become a very grave risk, and that is why discretion has been given to the Collectors and in the exercise of that discretion, the Collector has acted like that, in this instance."

SRI C. N. MUTHURANGA MUDALIYAR :—"Is it not the proper course to direct the local agent to purchase paddy from the wholesale merchant, if there is stock available?"

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—"This is only a temporary arrangement, Sir, to meet a situation which has arisen under unforseen circumstances. I do not think that any rule has been gravely violated by the Collector."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO.—"In view of the fact that there may be several similar cases where the E forms furnished by the Collectors to the ryots might not show either the serial number or the date of purchase, would it not be better that general instructions are given to all Collectors, that the bonus might be paid if the entries in the purchase registers support the transactions?"

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—"I am afraid, Sir, that such general instructions should not be issued in the interests of proper finance and accounting. These E form receipts convey certain implications and are intended for the Accountant-General for check, audit and verification, whether the bonus paid is in cash or in the form of manure. Any such small lapses in the proper filling up of the E forms might seriously affect the accounting procedure and lead to complications, and therefore on that account, it is not advisable to issue general instructions to the Collectors to overlook such lapses."

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SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" In view of the possibility that some of the Collectors might not be aware of the fact that they have the power to order such payments, unless it is brought to their notice, is it not better that they are informed accordingly by a circular? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" The Collectors have got the power to do so and they are aware of it and there is no need to issue general instructions in the matter."

Quota of rice allotted to Tinnevelly and Ramnad districts.

* 69 Q.—SRI K. MANATHUNAINATHA DESIGAR: Will the Hon. the Minister for Food be pleased to state—

(*a*) the quota of rice allotted to the districts of Ramnad and Tinnevelly in the months of January and February 1948; and

(*b*) the quantities actually supplied against the allotted quotas?

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" (*a*) The quotas of rice allotted are as follows :—

District.	January.	February.
Ramnad.	4,500 tons.	5,000 tons.
Tinnevelly.	4,500 tons.	5,000 tons.

" (*b*) The entire quantities mentioned above have been supplied."

SRI N. SANKARA REDDI :—" May I know, Sir, whether these are deficit or surplus districts? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" Both Ramnad and Tinnevelly are deficit districts, Sir."

SRI N. SANKARA REDDI :—" Is it the policy of Government not to send any rice to the deficit districts hereafter, above the allotted quota? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" The information I have given will show that wherever there is a demand for more rice particularly on account of any sudden food shortage, the Government take the earliest measures to meet it, independent of the fact whether the particular district is a deficit or a surplus district. It is the general belief that surplus districts do not require that sort of help, but even there, if there is any sudden shortage, the Government will do the needful to meet the shortage."

SRI N. SANKARA REDDI :—" Is it not a fact that the Collector of Kurnool has been informed by the Government that although Kurnool is a deficit district in rice that no rice will hereafter be sent to that district? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" The Kurnool district is predominently a millet producing district and the people of that district are mostly millet eaters. But if the Collector requires some quantity of rice urgently for meeting any